



Illustration by Jeanne R. Janish;
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ADOXA MOSCHATELLINA

MUSK-ROOT

Musk-root is a delicate, musky-scented perennial, 5-20 cm tall arising from a short rhizome. The several basal leaves have long petioles and blades divided into threes 2-3 times, with the ultimate segments broadly egg-shaped and lobed. There is one opposite pair of smaller stem leaves which are less dissected. Usually 5 flowers are borne in a compact head-like inflorescence at the tip of the stem. The inconspicuous, yellowish-green flowers, 5-8 mm wide are of two types: outside flowers usually have 3 sepals and 5 united petals, while the terminal flowers have 2 sepals and 4 united petals. The sepals are united to the wall of the ovary. The small dry fruit has 4-5 seeds. Flowering in June-early July; fruiting through July.

The leaves of this unusual plant resemble those of *AQUILEGIA*, and the flowers superficially resemble those of *SAXIFRAGA*, but it differs in having only 2-3 sepals. This monotypic family is most closely related to the Valerian Family from which it differs in having twice as many stamens as petals.